

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 280 827

SP 028 724

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 TITLE A Nationwide Study to Examine the Nature and Scope of the Sport Arena Management Profession.
 PUB DATE Apr 86
 NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the National Convention of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (Cincinnati, OH, April 10-13, 1986).
 PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; *Athletic Fields; *Career Choice; *College Curriculum; Communication Skills; *Employment Opportunities; Higher Education; Labor Market; *Salaries
 IDENTIFIERS *Sport Arena Management

ABSTRACT

This study examined the exact nature and scope of the sport arena management profession in terms of field growth and employment opportunities, salary potentials, and education requirements. Specific job performance competencies and related educational course work required for professionally trained sport arena managers were identified. Findings from a survey of upper level sport arena managers indicated that in terms of job performance competencies for entry level positions, supervision, budgeting, scheduling, arena operations, and communication skills were the more important courses to take in college. The development of professional preparation programs specifically designed to train sport arena management personnel was considered as an important future need by survey respondents. (JD)

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A NATIONWIDE STUDY TO EXAMINE THE NATURE AND SCOPE
OF THE SPORT ARENA MANAGEMENT PROFESSION

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Presentation made at the National Convention for the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, Cincinnati, Ohio (April, 1986).

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, a number of sport management/sport administration professional preparation programs have been established at colleges and universities located throughout the United States and Canada. Many of these programs offer training for possible careers in sport arena management. Unfortunately, little data exists pertaining to the exact nature and scope of the sport arena management profession. The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, to examine the exact nature and scope of the sport arena management profession in terms of field growth and employment opportunities, salary potentials, and education requirements. Second, to identify the specific job performance competencies and related educational course work required to professionally train sport arena managers. A survey instrument was developed and mailed to 189 upper level sport arena managers located throughout the United States. A total of 103 sport arena managers responded to the questionnaire for a 54.5% response rate. The tremendous growth of the arena management profession was reflected in the fact that 71% of the respondents indicated an increase in the total number of sport arena management positions available with their organizations during the past five years. An average of 7 full-time arena managers are presently employed by each organization. Only 35% of the respondents projected a need to hire additional sport arena managers for their organizations over the next five years. The average salary range for entry level positions was listed at \$17,360 to \$22,880. Middle and upper level management positions were listed at \$24,143 to \$33,510

and \$37,554 to \$52,029, respectively, The data revealed that 83% of the respondents hold college degrees (58% bachelors; 25% masters). The most frequently listed undergraduate degree majors were business administration (38%) and physical education and/or recreation (29%). Sport administration (58%) was the most frequently identified degree major at the graduate level. In terms of job performance competencies for entry level positions, supervision, budgeting, scheduling, arena operations, and communication skills were selected as being most important. For middle and upper level sport arena managers, budgeting, supervision, public relations, arena operations, and scheduling were identified as being most important. The development of professional preparation programs specifically designed to train sport arena management personnel was considered an important future need by 92% of the respondents. Communications, accounting, finance, and sport promotions were considered the most important courses to offer.

Sport arena management has been around for about as long as there have been organized sporting events. In ancient Rome, for example, the Circus Maximus and Coliseum had to have some form of arena management. It has been reported that spectator attendance at these events sometimes exceeded 75,000. Reports from ancient times also indicate that facilities were actually flooded with miniature naval battles held to the delight of spectators.

When one looks at more recent history, the intertwining of sport facilities with culture and political reality reached a new era with the 1936 Berlin Olympics. At these Games, Adolph Hitler tried to showcase not only Germany's athletes but its expensive sport facilities as well. It has been reported that Hitler was so concerned about making sure that Germany's facilities outclassed those of the United States that he had a small building from the Olympic Village at the 1932 Los Angeles Games placed next to a far superior structure at the 1936 Berlin Games.

The 1976 Montreal Olympiad and the 1980 Moscow Games have certainly carried on the tradition of making sport facilities a part of national pride and fanfare. Facilities for the 1976 Montreal Olympiad were initially estimated to cost \$316 million and ended up costing over \$1.5 billion. Similar inflated costs for facilities also affected the 1980 Moscow Games and the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

Although some have criticized the building of expensive sport structures when other serious financial problems exist in society, the building of sport facilities continues at a rapid

pace with the skylines of many communities throughout the United States and Canada accented by sport facilities. In some instances, these structures have been declared architectural wonders while drawing national and international acclaim.

As one reads through the sport management program brochures which have been developed for the many professional preparation programs located throughout the United States and Canada, it becomes obvious to the reader that sport arena/facility management has been identified by many of these programs as an area worthy of professional preparation within their curriculums. Ohio University, for example, as the first sport administration program in the United States has even changed its program name to include facility management. Their program is now called "Sport Administration and Facility Management".

If one also looks at the many career possibilities for sport management professionals, sport arena management clearly emerges as one of the most promising choices in terms of employment opportunities and career advancement. It is not uncommon to open an issue of The NCAA News or another trade publication and find job descriptions that read like the following:

SPORT FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Responsibilities: He/she must demonstrate management leadership skills. He/she must demonstrate competency in the the management of human resources, interpersonal relationships and communications. He/she must plan, organize, direct, control, administer all athletic

facilities, buildings and grounds; event management, crowd control, security maintenance and repairs of buildings, facilities and grounds. He/she must manage budgets, schedule events and activities, and supervise maintenance and custodial personnel.

Although college sport management programs have been criticized in recent months because of their rate of proliferation (while a supposedly limited job market exists), data pertaining to the arena management field suggests that it is alive and well. Furthermore, it offers yet another career market possibility for the sport management graduate. In an article entitled "In Pursuit of the Dome," it was stated that,

There's the Astrodome, Kingdome, Silverdome, Metrodome, and the Superdome. And the latest to join this select group of big-league stadiums is the \$77-million Hoosier Dome in the heart of downtown Indianapolis . . . Nearly a dozen cities are seriously planning or considering the construction of a domed stadium in the hope of either retaining or attracting majorleague football and baseball franchises. (p. 23)

As each domed facility is constructed, a number of arena management positions are created. This does not take into account the numerous ice arenas, natatoriums, field houses, and physical education complexes that are being constructed in cities across the United States and Canada that require facility managers. The list seems almost endless!

A close look at the organizational chart for the Indiana Hoosier Dome will help to illustrate the potential career choices in the sport arena management field (see Figure 1). As can be seen, the Hoosier Dome has five distinct departments (e.g., marketing, event management, operations, business management, sport coordinating). Within the marketing, event management, and sport coordinating departments, a number of potential positions exist for the sport management professional. Sales representative, public information director, and special services manager positions would all be of interest to the sport management graduate. In the event management department, event coordinator positions would be of special interest as well. Perhaps the most likely matches for sport management graduates would be in the sport coordinators department. Positions in this department include marketing and promotions coordinator, event supervisor, and special events coordinator.

Three questions will probably be confronted by individuals who are interested in including a sport arena management option in their sport management curriculum offerings. First, is sport arena management a realistic field to pursue for someone majoring in sport management? Second, what competencies (i.e., knowledges and skills) are needed for various positions within the arena management profession? Third, how might these competency needs influence curriculum development decisions? Unfortunately, no studies have been completed that provide answers to these questions.

PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and scope of the sport arena management profession. A survey instrument was developed and mailed to 189 upper level sport arena managers who are members of the International Association of Auditorium Managers.

RESULTS

The answer to the question related to whether sport arena management is a viable career option is an undisputed yes! Although the arena management profession is extremely diverse and somewhat difficult to get a handle on, it nevertheless is a profession wide open for the sport management professional. The survey results revealed that 71% of the 103 survey respondents (54.5% response rate) reported increases in the number of arena management positions within their organizations over the last five years (see Table 1).

The need for competency development through advanced education is reflected in the fact that 83% of the survey respondents possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree (see Table 2) with 38% of these individuals holding a degrees in business and 29% in physical education and/or recreation (see Table 3). It is interesting to note that over half of the respondents who have master's degrees (N=26) majored in sport administration (see Table 3). When the sport arena managers were asked if they could foresee a need for colleges to train individuals in skills and

knowledges specifically related to sport arena management, 92% stated yes (see Table 4).

The survey data also revealed an alarming lack of female employment in upper level sport arena management positions. Only 5% of the respondents were female. The specific reason for this low percentage is not clear; but, these figures are certainly consistent with the small number of females found in upper level sport administration positions nationwide (see Table 5).

The following data will shed some light on the second question pertaining to sport arena management competency requirements. When the respondents were asked to rank the most important job performance competencies for entry level sport arena management positions, the following competencies were identified: personnel supervision; budgeting; scheduling (bookings); communications (written and oral); and, public relations skills. These were followed by competencies in human relations, planning and organizing, promotions, marketing, facility operations and maintenance, time management, concessions, ticketing, and decision making. For middle and upper level sport arena managers, respondents identified budgeting, personnel supervision, scheduling, public relations, communications (written and oral), promotions, marketing, crowd management and control, and contract negotiations as being most important (see Table 7).

When asked to rank course work that they would recommend for the training of sport arena managers, communications (written and oral) was listed first followed by accounting, budgeting,

financial management, sport promotions, sport administration, marketing, business administration principles, facility and operations management, public relations, legal aspects (including business law, contract law, and sport law), insurance and risk management, human resource management, computer literacy, and first aid/safety (see Table 6).

Respondents of this study listed interesting salary figures. Entry level salaries, for instance, are very similar to those offered for teaching positions (e.g., \$17,360 to \$22,880). However, salaries for middle management and upper management are clearly above normal teaching salaries (see Table 8). The potential to reach salaries that are higher than those offered in teaching seems to be a distinct possibility in the sport arena management profession.

DISCUSSION

Sport arena management appears to be a profession which holds tremendous promise for sport management graduates. As more and more professional preparation programs are developed in sport management, individuals involved in curriculum development will require knowledge of specific competencies in sport arena management. The results of this study should help fill this void. As the field expands, it is hoped that additional competency studies will be completed and the results utilized in future curriculum development.

Reference

Roessing, W.: In pursuit of the dome. Sky Magazine. 14:
23-31, February, 1985.

Figure 1

TABLE OF ORGANIZATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD OF MANAGERS (of Marion County, IN)

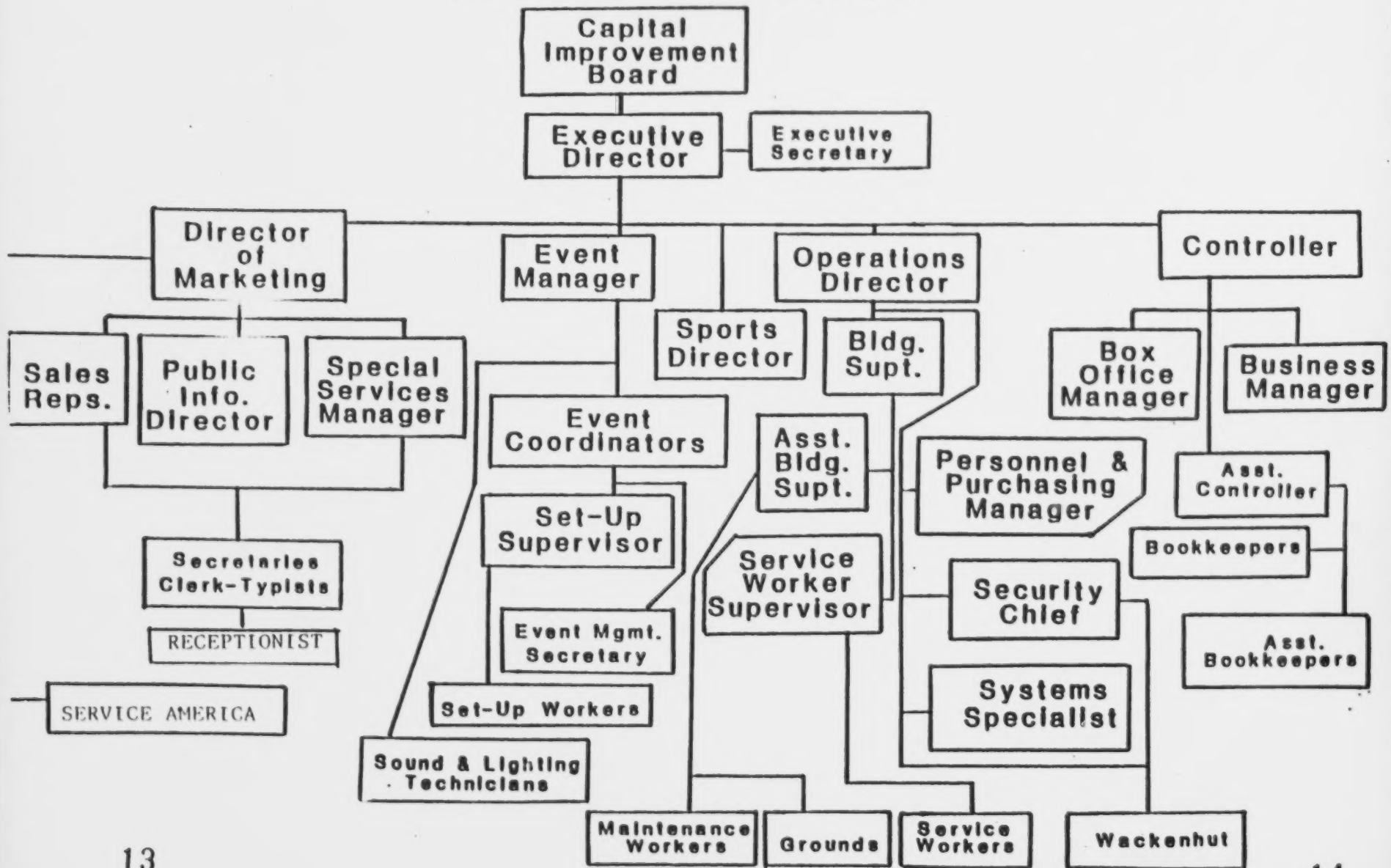


TABLE 1 - EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR THE NUMBER OF FULL-TIME
SPORT ARENA MANAGEMENT POSITIONS WITHIN ORGANIZATION

Number of Positions	Past Five Years		Next Five Years	
	N	%	N	%
Increase	73	71	35	34
Decrease	2	2	4	4
Remain the same	28	27	64	62
	103	100%	103	100%

TABLE 2 - HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL DEGREE OF
UPPER LEVEL SPORT ARENA MANAGERS

	N	%
High School Diploma	15	15
Bachelor's Degree	60	58
Master's Degree (including MBA)	26	25
Doctoral Degree	0	0
Other	2	2
	103	100%

TABLE 3 - COLLEGE MAJORS OF UPPER LEVEL
SPORT ARENA MANAGERS

Major	Undergraduate		Graduate	
	N	%	N	%
Physical Education, recreation, Sport Administration	25	29	15	58
Business/Management	32	38	7	27
Criminal Justice	7	8	0	0
Political Science	7	8	0	0
Public Administration	9	10	1	3
Other	6	7	3	12
	86	100%	26	100%

TABLE 4 - "Do you foresee a need for colleges to train individuals in the skills and knowledges related to sport arena management?"

	N	%
YES	95	92%
NO	7	7
OTHER	1	1
	<u>103</u>	<u>100%</u>

RESULTS

TABLE 5 - GENDER OF UPPER LEVEL SPORT
ARENA MANAGERS

	N	%
Male	97	94
Female	6	6
	103	100%

TABLE 6 - RECOMMENDED COURSES FOR THE TRAINING OF
SPORT ARENA MANAGERS

Course Title	Rank	N	%
Communications (Written, Oral)	1	50	49%
Accounting	2	41	40
Budgeting	3	41	40
Financial Management	4	40	39
Sport Promotions	5	30	29
Sport/Athletic Administration	6	28	27
Marketing	7	17	17
Business Administration	8	17	17
Facilities/Operations Management	9	13	13
Public Relations	10	13	13
Business Law	11	11	11
Personnel	12	7	7
Other	13	5	5

TABLE 7 - IMPORTANT ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS/COMPETENCIES

Skill/Competency	Entry Level			Upper Level Mgt.		
	Rank	N	%	Rank	N	%
Personnel Supervision	1	86	83%	2	67	65%
Budgeting/Accounting	2	73	71	1	92	80
Scheduling/Bookings	3	63	61	3	52	50
Communications/Speaking	4	39	38	5	30	32
Public Relations	5	26	25	4	33	29
Human Relations	6	22	21	7	22	21
Planning/Organizing	7	18	17	8	19	18
Promotions/Marketing	8	15	15	6	26	25
Facility/Maintenance	9	14	14	9	17	17
Time Management	10	9	9	11	4	4
Concessions/Sales	11	8	8	10	12	12
Decisions Making	12	3	3	12	4	4
Other	13	2	2	13	2	0

TABLE 8 - AVERAGE SALARY RANGE OF SPORT ARENA MANAGERS

	Average Low to Average High		
Entry Level	\$17,360	to	\$22,880
Middle Management	\$24,143	to	\$33,510
Upper Management	\$37,554	to	\$52,029
	(100)		(100)
No answer =	(3)		(3)